Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 16:1-13): Jesus said to his disciples, "A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.' The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.'

He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.' Then to another the steward said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' The steward said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.'

And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon."

"You cannot serve both God and mammon"

Fr. Joan MARQUÉS i Suriñach
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Today the Gospel presents us with the figure of the unfaithful steward: a man who took advantage of his job to steal from his master. He was a simple steward, and he acted like the master. We should bear in mind:

First: Material goods are good things, because they have come from the hands of God. Therefore, we must love them.

Second: But we cannot “worship” them as if they were God and the end of our existence; we must be detached from them. Riches are to serve God and our fellow human beings; they must not serve to dethrone God from our hearts and our deeds: “You cannot serve both God and mammon.”

Third: We are not the masters of material goods, but simple stewards; therefore, we must not only preserve them, but also make them produce to the maximum, within our means. The parable of the talents teaches this clearly.

And fourth: We must not fall into avarice; We must practice generosity, which is a Christian virtue that we must all live, the rich and the poor, each according to their circumstances. We must give to others!

What if I already have enough assets to cover my expenses? Do I still need to earn more? Yes, because you should also strive to increase them so that you can give more (parish, diocese, apostolate). Remember the words of Saint Ambrose: "You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich."

Are you a selfish person who only thinks about accumulating material goods for yourself, like the steward of the Gospel, lying, stealing, practicing stinginess and hardness of heart, which prevent you from being moved by the needs of others? Do you not often think of the words of Saint Paul: "God loves a cheerful giver"? Be generous!

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "I do not have any other means to prove my love to you, but to throw flowers, that is, to let no little sacrifice, no look, no word pass, to take advantage of all the littlest of things and to do them out of love." (St. Therese of Lisieux)

- "Money is not "dishonest" in itself, but more than anything else it can close man in a blind egocentrism." (Benedict XVI)

- "‘They had everything in common.’ (Acts 4:32) ‘Everything the true Christian has is to be regarded as a good possessed in common with everyone else. All Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy . . . and of their neighbors in want.’ A Christian is a steward of the Lord's goods." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 952)